

NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT



Attendance Policy

LAST UPDATED AND REVIEWED	Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance	November 2022
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POLICY TYPE	Voluntary/School Policy	
REVIEW FREQUENCY	Every 3 years – November 2025	

RESPONSIBLE		
Management Team	Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance	
Governing Committee	Resources Committee	

APPROVED		
Approved by:	Headteacher – 2 nd December 2022	
	Minuted at FGB Meeting on 5 th December 2022	

UPDATE:		
Shared Drive	9 th December 2022	
Website (if applicable)	9 th December 2022	

Courage Commitment Compassion

NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL GOVERNORS' POLICY ON PUPIL ATTENDANCE

To be read in conjunction with

Working together to improve school attendance May 2022

Education Act 1996

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4 2016 report

1 Principles

Students who attend school are more likely to do well and achieve their full potential both academically and personally. It is the responsibility of Parents and Carers, staff, students and governors to ensure all students have good attendance.

We also recognise that for some students, good attendance can be difficult. Newlands Girls' School values all pupils and as set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

The law relating to school attendance states in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 that the parent of every child of compulsory age shall cause him/her to receive fulltime education suitable:

- a. to age, ability and aptitude and
- b. to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their Parents or Carers the importance of regular attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that each student is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines students develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between underachievement and attendance below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.

2 Aims

- To ensure that attendance and punctuality are a priority for all those associated with the school including students, Parents/Carers, staff and governors, so that excellent attendance remains an integral part of our school ethos and culture.
- To provide a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to Parents/Carers and students.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data and to ensure that we visibly promote our high expectations for attendance.
- To promote effective partnerships with the relevant services and agencies.
- To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- To recognise that Children Missing from Education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues and as such, act on this accordingly.

3 The School Day

The school day is structured as follows:

Tutor time and AM registration	8.45-9.05
Period 1	9.05-10.05
Period 2	10.05-11.05
Break	11.05-11.25
Period 3	11.25-12.25
Lunch	12.25-13.05
Period 4 and PM registration	13.05-14.05
Period 5	14.05-15.05

Recording attendance

- Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day during tutor time and again for period 4. Tutors and teachers should mark students as present only if they have physically seen them.
- AM Registration
If a student arrives between 8:45 and 9.05am the attendance will be registered as L (before register closes) If a student registers after 9.05am they will be registered as U (late after register closes).
- PM Registration
If a student arrives late to period 4, attendance will be registered as L for that session.

4 Promoting good attendance and punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Talk about attendance by using number of days and lessons missed as well as raw attendance data.
- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our school communications, Headteacher's newsletter and website.
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4. Promoting good attendance and punctuality - continued

- Report attendance and punctuality rate to parents via progress reports and EduLink.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying tutor and team achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance using measures including letters and phone calls home, year group celebration assemblies, displays, personal congratulations.
- Meet with parents, students and staff to work together on raising attendance levels individually and across the school.

5. Supporting students' attendance

Newlands works to promote excellent attendance through the mechanisms outlined above. Although we have this preventative approach, we recognise that there may be occasions where a student is at risk of attendance below that which we expect. We recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents and Carers should make school staff aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school. This will help the school to identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and Looked After children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.
(See Appendix 3).

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both Parents, Carers and students. The school seeks to work in partnership with home and to foster a supportive relationship in the interests of the student. Contact is therefore seen as a first step and not a last resort. Home visits will often be carried out in order to support attendance and also form part of our wider safeguarding protocols.

In the first instance: Early Intervention

The school will support students and Parents/Carers to address any in-school barriers to attendance. This may result in a meeting with Parents/Carers and/or students to agree actions and interventions, so that we can work together to prevent further absence. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we will work with relevant organisations, as required.

If absence intensifies: Targeted Intervention

We will work alongside other relevant partners and the Local Authority. This could involve a range of different interventions including an Early Help assessment. More formal conversations will be had with Parents/Carers and the student and the school will put in place an Attendance Intervention Plan. In addition, the Local Authority Attendance Team will also be aware of the level of attendance.

Should this support not be effective or not engaged with, the school will contact the Local Authority. This may result in:

- The issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice if appropriate
- Putting more formal support in place
- Further support from Children's Social Care

5. Supporting students' attendance - continued

The school will take advantage of appropriate opportunities to emphasise the importance of good attendance and punctuality with Parents/Carers who are primarily responsible for ensuring students attend school through:

- Conversations with Parents/Carers
- Parent carer evenings
- Newsletters and letters home
- Individual meetings

Students with Medical Conditions or SEND

We appreciate that some students face greater barriers to attendance, and these can include students who have long term medical conditions or SEND. The attendance ambition for these students is the same as all students, however, we will work with Parents/Carers putting in place additional support, including that from external partners, as required.

6. Roles and responsibilities

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is recorded accurately and regularly analysed. This person will work alongside the Attendance Team and Heads of Year to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible . That person's details can be found on the school web site.

Senior leaders will

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their Parents/Carers
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through regular reporting to the Governing Body
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all individual students (and groups of students), including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

Senior leaders will – continued

- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Work with the student services team to document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

The Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance will:

- Promote attendance among the school community
- Communicate attendance updates and matters to staff and Parents/Carers
- Support the introduction of systems to reward outstanding attendance and significant improvements to attendance
- Work with Heads of Year to review attendance regularly and systematically
- Meet the Education Welfare Officer regularly to discuss attendance matters and review students' attendance
- Work with relevant external agencies
- Promote high levels of attendance across all students
- Support vulnerable groups of students
- Liaise with external agencies to safeguard students with attendance concerns

Heads of Year will:

- Liaise with the Attendance Team, Education Welfare Officer and SLT on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Promote & reward good attendance and improvement to attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a students' absence and monitor any safeguarding issues
- Support students and Parents/Carers to overcome barriers to attendance, arrange meetings and signpost appropriate support
- Liaise with external agencies to safeguard students with attendance concerns.

Form Tutors will:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Monitor students' attendance
- Promote and reward good attendance of students at all appropriate opportunities
- Support students to track their attendance
- Liaise with the Head of Year and Attendance Officer on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a student's absence
- Support students with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school
- Help to follow up unexplained absences
- Contact Parents and Carers about attendance concerns following three days of absence

The Attendance Officer will:

- Collate all leave of absence request forms and inform parents of the school's decision to authorise or unauthorise absence via letter or email.
- Collate and share whole school and year attendance every month
- Provide early identification of absent Disadvantaged students
- Identify and intervene where patterns of absence occur
- Refer continued absence concerns to HOY
- Regularly meet with the SLT Lead to review attendance strategies

The Attendance Officer will: - continued

- Keep all school register codes up to date
- Collate interventions on absence, keeping a record of letters sent and penalty notices issued
- Send out warning letters prior to a Penalty notice

We ask that Parents and Carers will:

- Not keep their child away from school to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Inform the school on the first day of absence and all subsequent days, unless the school has indicated otherwise
- Discuss with the Head of Year any planned absences well in advance
- Support the school in aiming for 100% attendance each year for their child
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by:
 - Emailing the school
 - Messaging via EduLink
 - Phone calls
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance
- Put requests for absence in writing. These requests should be sent to the Headteacher using the 'Request for term time absence' form, available from the school website.

The Governing Body will:

- Review attendance data
- Challenge senior leaders on strategic attendance developments
- Support the school by ensuring attendance is a key priority

Students will:

- Attend school regularly and on time
- Be punctual to all lessons
- Follow the correct procedure if they arrive late.

7. Requests for leave absence during term time

Parents/Carers who need to take their child out of the school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Headteacher using the 'request for term time absence' form which is available on the school website. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing and if leave is granted, it will outline the conditions of leave granted. The Headteacher will consider all requests and decide whether or not to authorise the request. Accompanying letters may be sent out by members of the senior leadership team following consultation with the Headteacher.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent/carer takes their child out of the school the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school is likely to request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrate's court.

8. Types of absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher and cannot be authorised by Parents/Carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Parents/Carers must advise the school by telephone and/or email on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. Parents/Carers should contact the school on the morning of each day the student is absent.

When a student is absent and their Parents/Carers have not contacted the school, the process set out in Appendix 1 will be followed.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness

If a student is unwell and unable to attend school the attendance is authorised as illness using the I code.

If a student has a pattern of illness and their attendance is a concern, Parents or Carers may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Headteacher to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents/Carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day or if this is not possible, after 2pm. Where this is also not possible, students must attend the school for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card to school staff.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances and is at the discretion of the Headteacher. A family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.

Suspended (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The Attendance Officer will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Headteacher.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include (but are not restricted to):

A student's/family member's birthday

Shopping for uniforms

Having their hair cut

Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes

"Couldn't get up"

Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school

Family holidays

Visits in term time to see a sick relative

A student cannot be absent from the school in order to translate for a family member

8. Types of absence - continued

Persistent Absence

If a student's attendance falls below 90% they are 'persistently absent' and this can have a significant impact on their ability to succeed within school. Meetings will be held with Parents/ Carers before attendance falls to this level, but by this level, other professionals are likely to also be involved and the school may also move to suggest an Early Help referral.

Severe Absence

Students whose attendance falls below 50% are classified as having severe absence. In these cases, the Education Welfare Office will support the school by working with the families directly.

9. Deletions from the register

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration - England) Regulations 2013, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

The school is replaced by another school via a School Attendance Order

The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority

The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age

Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed

Death of a student

Transfer between schools

Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system

Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student

A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age

In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)

20 days continuous unauthorised absence during which both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student

Student has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate them

10. Penalty Notices

The use of a Penalty Notice is an intervention to improve attendance.

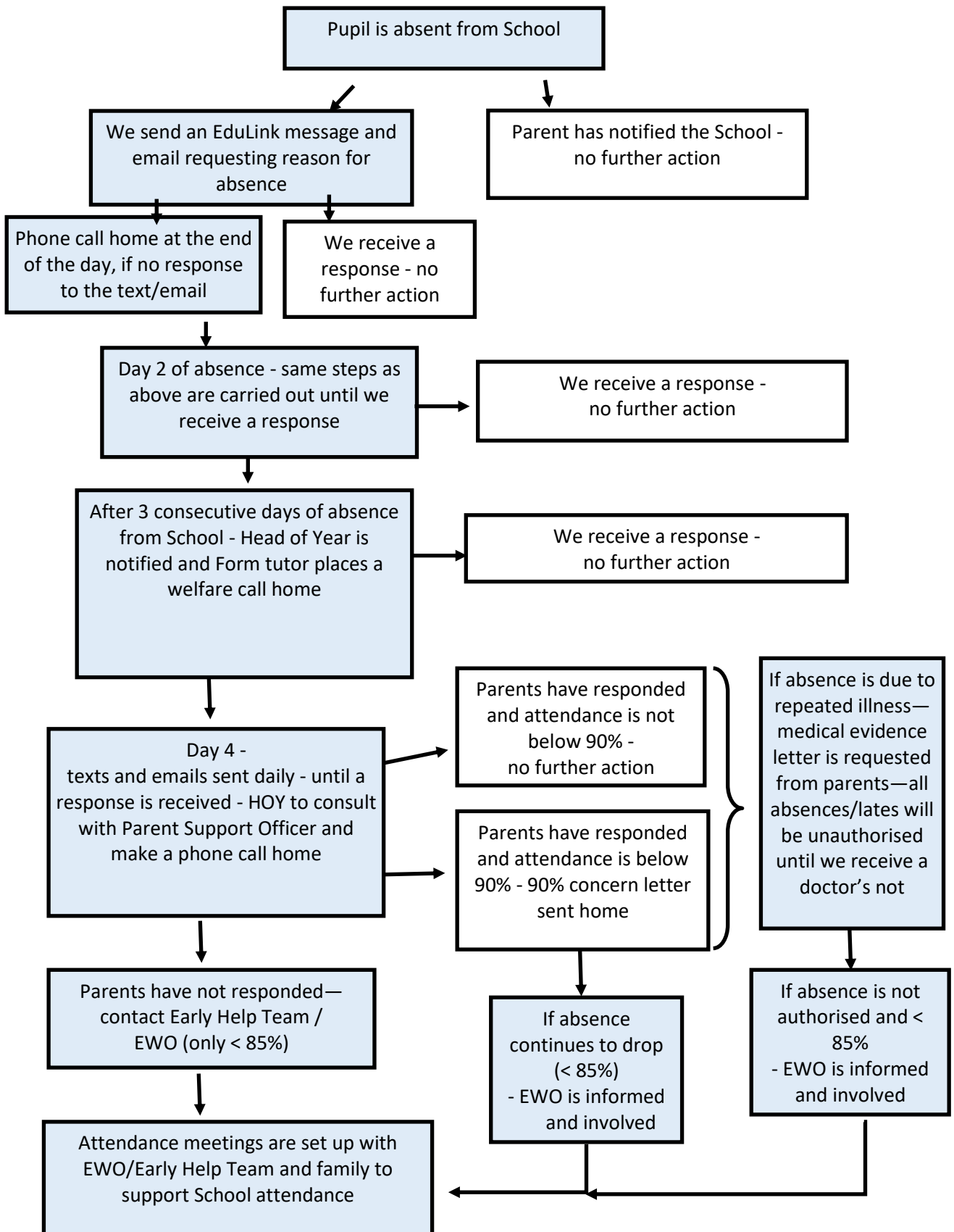
Parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if their child is absent from school without permission. This can include parents who take their children abroad during term time without getting authorisation from the school.

The penalty is currently £60 for those who pay within 21 days, rising to £120 for those who pay within 28 days, per student, per parent.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Appendix 1
Flow chart for absence



Each case is different and our approach may need adjusting to suit needs of pupil/family.

Appendix 2
Flow chart for interventions

**Attendance
intervention flow**

Newlands Girls' School




Appendix 3

Range of possible interventions (this list is not exhaustive and should only be used to give an indication of possible interventions. The actual intervention(s) used will be carefully chosen to support the student and their family to improve attendance.)

Intervention	Lead staff
Supportive meeting with Parents/Carers and student	HOY/SLT
Punctuality report	HOY
Start the day in the SFC	HOY
Home visit by staff members	SLT/HOY/Attendance officer
Reward improvement in attendance	Form tutor/HOY
Referral to EWO	Attendance officer
Refer to parent support worker	HOY/attendance officer
SFC mentoring	HOY
Text message sent to Parents/Carers	Attendance officer
Letter of concern sent to Parents/Carers	Attendance officer
Review classes and/or curriculum	SLT
Issue an attendance contract to students and Parents/Carers	SLT/HOY
Support absent students on their return: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to catch up work • Re-entry procedure • Visit to school in advance of return 	Form tutor/HOY
Refer to outside agencies	HOY
Assign a 6 th form mentor	
Identify barriers through discussion	Form tutor/HOY
Producing a morning schedule for students to use	Form tutor/HOY
Investigate a managed move if deemed suitable for improving attendance	SLT

Attendance award template

Attendance Award



This certificate acknowledges that

NAME of form FORM

had 100% attendance in Term 1 2022

Congratulations on this excellent record.

Signed: HOY Signed: Snr Link

Attendance Matters

My child has 90% attendance, which is good isn't it?

The short answer is no. Small improvements in attendance make a big difference in the long term:

*Persistent absentees whose attendance is **below 90%** have only a **35.6%** chance of achieving **5 passes (9-4) at GCSE.***

*Absence which falls below 90% reduces the average GCSE score to **6.62** compare this with those whose absence is above 96% and this rises to **8.4.***

What can I do to help?

There are 4 main areas that you as a parent or carer can support with:

1) Illness

If you are unsure if your child is ill, send them in anyway. We will send them home if they are genuinely unwell.

Children can be given medication at school such as paracetamol or antibiotics. Do not let the administration of medication be a reason for pupils staying at home.

If your child is absent due to illness, do not give them another day "just to make sure" or "because it's Friday anyway". Send them back to school as soon as they are well.

2) Medical Appointments

Make sure all medical appointments are outside school hours. If medical appointments are essential, please arrange these between morning and afternoon registration where possible



3) Holidays

Holidays during term-time **will not be agreed.** Any planned absence needs to be agreed by the Headteacher and will be granted on a case by case basis and in advance.

4) Other absences

Please make sure your child has all the equipment and uniform they need. Do not take your child out of school to replace any missing items; this should be done after school or at the weekends.

Why are you telling me this?

The higher your child's attendance, the greater the number of good GCSEs they are likely to achieve. Your child's attendance has fallen below **90%**.

She has missed 3.5 weeks of education and 90 lessons.

Your child is competing against every other student nationwide. Give your child the best chance possible; make sure their attendance is above 90%. We cannot teach them everything they need to know if they are not here...

Help us give your child the best chance of success

NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL

Farm Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 5JB – Telephone 01628 625068

Email: attendance@newlandsgirls.co.uk



REQUEST FOR TERM TIME ABSENCE

The school does not authorise term time absences unless there are exceptional circumstances. Our attendance policy is on the reverse of this form and can also be found on the school website. Requests for term time absence should be made at least 14 days before the start date.

SURNAME:		FORENAME:		REGISTRATION GROUP:	
REASON FOR ABSENCE:					
START DATE (first day of school missed):		END DATE (return to school date):		TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:	
<p>Please note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Absences not agreed in advance will be deemed as UNAUTHORISED and so noted in the student's school record. UNAUTHORISED absences may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer to be considered for a Fixed Penalty Notice or other action. If a student fails to return by the agreed date the Education Welfare Officer may be informed. In extreme cases a student may be removed from the school role and parents/carers will need to reapply for a place via the Local Authority Admissions Team. 					
I have read and understand the information above.					
SIGNED:				Parent/Carer	
(please delete as necessary)					
PLEASE PRINT NAME:				DATE:	
<p>For Office Use: Percentage attendance so far this academic year % Having considered your application very carefully, the request for term time absence from: to: (days)</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Has been agreed and authorised. <input type="checkbox"/> Has not been agreed. The absence would be noted as UNAUTHORISED. </p>					
Signed:					
Date:					

Miss J Capon, Headteacher

Request for absence not approved letter:

Dear

Thank you for returning your request for leave of absence for the dates given above. As you know schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. We have already outlined that there is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday and if you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we may refer the matter for consideration of legal action.

We have looked carefully at your circumstances and on this occasion your request has not been approved. The absence request form is attached to this letter, and also acts as the Penalty Warning.

We enclose the following additional information on attendance that you may find useful:

- Your child's attendance certificate
- Parent leaflet on Penalty Notices
- Our school leaflet on absence
- DFE guidance on attendance effects on attainment.

Attendance is measured by sessions which are equivalent to one half day. We use percentages to support students and help them gauge their attendance across the year. We strongly recommend that you take all holiday out of term time and check all internal/ external school assessments before taking your child out of school. All guidance is found in our Attendance Policy, found at www.newlandsgirlsschool.co.uk

Parents will receive a Penalty Notice if their son/daughter is marked as being:

Absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days), which is unauthorised, during the last 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive.

Thank you for supporting your child's attendance. We trust that your child's full attendance will be encouraged given this information and our decision. If you have further attendance queries please contact your child's Head of Year or, if it is regarding this specific request, please write to the Headteacher.

Yours sincerely

Attendance concern letter

Dear «Parental_Salutation»

Having reviewed attendance records so far, this academic year, I am writing to express my concern that «Forename» has only achieved an % attendance record so far this school year; Good attendance and the recommended level by the Local Education Authority is currently at least 95%.

We may have received correspondence from you informing us of the reason for «Forename»'s absence due to ill health and I do understand that this cannot always be avoided. However, I would become concerned if this level of ill health continued as it could start to have a detrimental effect on her school work and we would need to look at ways to ensure that «Forename» does not fall behind.

If you or your daughter would like any support in this matter in the future or you would like to discuss this further, then please feel free to contact me at any time.
I hope by working together we can see an improvement in «Forename»'s attendance.

Yours sincerely

Letter requesting medical evidence

Dear «Parental_Salutation»

I am writing to you regarding the ongoing concerns I have about «Forename»'s attendance. «Forename»'s current attendance is %.

The register shows that many absences are attributed to illness. I am therefore in the position that I must now ask that any future absence from school **must** be covered by medical certificates, this includes when «Forename» is late to school. Any absences not covered by medical evidence will be marked as unauthorised. This will be effective from DATE.

I hope to see an improvement in «Forename»'s attendance.

Yours sincerely